

OCI NO. 1545/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
4 June 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam  
(As of 12:00 P.M. EDT)

Saigon

1. Twelve monks, who met at the Buddhist Institute this morning (Vietnam time), decided against accepting the resignations of Thichs Tam Chau and Ho Giac. An institute communique following the meeting, however, apparently claimed that Ky and Thieu had promised Buddhist leaders they would step down before the 6 June deadline for enlarging the Directorate (National Leadership Committee).

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The communique noted that if the promise is not honored, an appropriate protest will be made.

2. In a second communique following this morning's meeting, the bonzes declared that it is the responsibility of the Armed Forces Congress to change the government. A press interpretation of the communique suggested that the Armed Forces Congress has been asked to replace Ky and Thieu.

3.

the generals will make cabinet changes when it enlarges the Directorate. The Secretary of Labor, Nguyen Xuan Phong, has apparently received instructions to resign from the cabinet by 6 June. He claims that all the cabinet members have received similar instructions.

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4. The 10 proposed Directorate members will be appointed by the generals. Three of them will be chosen one each from the northern, central, and southern sectors of the country. There will be a member chosen from each of the Buddhist, Catholic, Hoa Hao, and Cao Dai religions. The remaining three members will be "independents" without political or religious ties. Ky, Thieu, and the chairman of the Election Law Drafting Committee have been soliciting recommendations from religious leaders, [REDACTED]

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5. As reported in the last two Bulletins, The Directorate has no intention of weakening its control by the compromise moves. [REDACTED]

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6. It appears that the Buddhist Institute position on 4 June is between the conciliatory stand of Tam Chau and the severe stand of Tri Quang, whose control of Hue seems to be on the wane. If the Directorate strategy is successful, additional protests, suicides, and militant Buddhist tactics might result after 6 June.

#### Buddhist Fiery Suicides Increased

7. Three more self-immolations marred negotiations today. A nun burned herself on the Institute grounds in Saigon at 2:00 a.m. Vietnam time this morning. Another nun in Nha Trang city killed herself at the same time in the same manner. In the northernmost province of Quang Tri at 4:30 a.m. Vietnam time, a novice monk repeated the earlier acts.

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Hue

8. Hue appeared to be returning to normal today. The airport and government offices reopened. The Consulate reports that four 1st Division infantry battalions and an armored cavalry regiment are in the city. General Lam, the new I Corps commander, reportedly visited Hue today and gave his approval of events there to 1st Division officers.

9. The Consul-General, however, reports that General Nhuan is still partially under the influence of Tri Quang. Generals Dinh and Thi are playing a waiting game, and, since they have no command responsibilities, can be expected to side with the group that can best advance their personal interests. In spite of the superficial appearance of governmental control over the city, the Consular officer expects considerable maneuvering by Tri Quang, Nhuan, and the rebel students before the situation can be called stable.

10. The Directorate does not plan to send other troops to Hue unless the 1st Division is unable to cope with the dissident students, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The generals cite the loyalty to the government of the 1st Division chief of staff, the three regimental commanders, and the armored commanders. Most of the struggle forces, whose armed strength is estimated between 850 and 1,000, have fled to the Dieu De and Tu Dam pagodas which are also the strongholds of Tri Quang. [REDACTED] the tactics of cordoning off the pagodas in Da Nang will be utilized in Hue.

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